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PROGRAM Meet the Press

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SUBJECT Ambassador Jeane J. Kirkpatrick

MARVIN KALB: Our guest today on Meet the Press is Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, head of the U.S. Delegation to the United Nations. A political scientist and specialist in Latin American politics, Ambassador Kirkpatrick has played a key role in shaping administration policies of that region. She holds Cabinet rank and is a member of the National Security Council

Our reporters today are Henry Trewhitt, of the Baltimore Sun; Robert Novak, of the Chicago Sun-Times; Hendrick Smith, of The New York Times; and to open the questioning, our regular panelist Bill Monroe, of NBC News.

BILL MONROE: Madam Ambassador, The New York Times says this morning that the U.S. will pay a heavy cost for the invasion of Grenada. Quoting the Times editorial, "The cost is loss of the high moral ground, a demonstration to the world that America has no more respect for laws and borders, for the codes of civilization, that the Soviet Union." What is your feeling about the cost?

AMBASSADOR JEANE J. KIRKPATRICK: Well, I think the New York Times -- with all due respect, I think the New York Times is simply wrong. I think, in fact, that the -- those nations who may seriously feel that it was an immoral act already thought we were an immoral power. I expect that most of the nations in the region will breathe a sigh of relief, as a matter of fact, at the success of the operation and at the removal of what a good number of them recognize was a clear and present danger to their own security.

I think that, furthermore, the -- the feeling of inherent security and the certain knowledge that the legal

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grounds of our operation were -- were sound will prove to be much stronger than any kind of reflexive Latin disapproval of U.S. intervention anyplace in the region.

It's interesting to note that the countries of Central America, with the single exception of Nicaragua, and several of the most key countries in Latin America have been very mild and ambiguous and ambivalent in their comments on the action, because they understand the extent to which their security depends on a confident, strong American presence.

MONROE: Well, Mrs. Kirkpatrick, not a single nation except those allied with us in the action against Grenada have spoken up in our defense. The French and the Dutch voted against us in the Security Council, the Mexicans and other members of the OAS have criticized us. Can you cite a single provision of international law, the United Nations, the Organization of American States, under which we have the right to invade a nation like Grenada if we feel there chaos there, or we worry that some of our people may be in danger?

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: Oh, certainly. And let me just say that I did that in the -- in my speech before the U.N., in which I presented the U.S. case. I said that the U.N. Charter does not simply forbid the use of force under all circumstances as an absolute. The U.N. Charter leaves very ample ground for the use of force against force in protection of the other rights and values in the Charter. And those other values include security and peace and democracy, in fact, even in the U.N. Charter. We acted, of course, at the request of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States. We acted -- you say "not a single nation." if I may say so, that's also mistaken. We acted with the full approval of other key nations in the Caribbean. Jamaica and Barbados, for example, also participated in the action.

MONROE: Those six.

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: Well, those six, yes. But those are the states in the region.

KALB: Thank you, Ambassador Kirkpatrick. We'll be back with more questions for Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick.

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KALB: Our guest on Meet the Press, U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick. Mr. Smith?

HEDRICK SMITH: Madam Ambassador, you say the legal argument for our going into Grenada is sound. If that's the case, why hasn't it been more persuasive with old allies, like the British, the French, the West Germans, the Italians, all of whom

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have either criticized us or voted against us in the U.N.?

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: Let me say that the -- Our European allies are principally, I believe, allied with us on matters that concern the defense of Europe. NATO was one of the collective security agreements which President Harry Truman negotiated and the Congress ratified after World War II, but it was only one of those. They do not necessarily show very much sensitivity to U.S. security in other regions and we don't necessarily approve of their policies all the time.

The fact is that we Americans have a somewhat sentimental picture about our relations with our European allies in international affairs. That alliance has always been focussed on the defense of Europe and they have repeatedly undertaken actions without consulting with us, for example, in other parts of the world. Sometimes we don't approve of those actions either. And we undertake actions independently of them, and sometimes they don't approve of those.

This is an action which above all concerned our -- our region, our region geographically. It's only -- it was not at all involved in NATO. It's importantly related, I think, to our ability to fulfill our NATO obligations in the long run, but in an indirect kind of way.

I think what's important is that the states of the region who were concerned approved the action and, indeed, requested it, and wouldn't necessarily approve what we did in --to help in the defense of Europe.

SMITH: Well, you say that they're mainly focused on Europe, but we backed the British when they were involved in the battle of the Falkland Islands, very much involving Latin America. The British didn't back us on this one. How do you explain that and how do you react to that?

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: Well, frankly, I find that rather difficult to explain.

SMITH: What message are the Nicaraguans and others in Central America supposed to get from this action? Does Nicaragua now have to worry about American intervention down there? Should they? Is that the intended message?

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: If I may say so, Nicaragua worries all the time about U.S. intervention in Nicaragua. They, as --from the perspective in the U.N. I'm very sensitive to that, because every few months they come to the U.N. and say that we are about to launch a massive U.S. military invasion of Nicaragua. They did that first about a year-and-a-half ago. I think that Nicaragua feels continuously threatened and what they feel threatened by is the growing competence and confidence of their

own neighbors -- of Honduras, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala -- and by the cotadora process which has now worked out some points, many of which are not very acceptable to Nicaragua.

KALB: Mr. Novak?

ROBERT NOVAK: Ambassador Kirkpatrick, if there had not been one American student on the island of Grenada, or no substantial number of them, do you think this administration would have launched the operation at the request of the Eastern Caribbean states?

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: I don't know. I argued in the United Nations, Bob, that I believed there was a combination of factors, each of which played a significant role in our decision, legal factors, and -- each of which figure in the legal case for our action.

First was indeed, as the President's emphasized, Secretary Shultz has emphasized, the protection of innocent American nationals, some -- nearly a thousand of them on that island and in a highly vulnerable condition. Second was the request of the Organization of East Caribbean States. Third was the virtual vacuum of power on the island and -- which was accompanied by very great violence.

NOVAK: Well, let me -- let me re-phase it, Madam Ambassador. If there were no American nationals in substantial numbers, was there ample justification on these other reasons for launching the operation?

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: That's one of what my husband calls "what would you do if your grandmother died next Thursday" questions. You know, I don't know. I haven't addressed that question very specifically. I know that the importance -- that the defense of American nationals on the island figured very importantly in the President's decision.

NOVAK: I wonder if I could quickly switch to Lebanon. As Ambassador to the United Nations, would you favor the replacement of the American Marines by a United Nations peacekeeping force?

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: Oh, under the right circumstances, with the right mandate, of course. And I -- I'm sure you know that the United States and the other members of the multinational force have explored at the U.N. ways of introducing UNIFIL troops, United Nations troops, into the region of the Chouf, and the Bekka, and other highly controverted areas of Beirut -- of Lebanon, in and around Beirut.

The Soviet Union is a member of the United Nations Security Council with a veto power. They have not been enthusi-

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astic about permitting U.N. troops into any area in which it looks like one of their client states, or close associates at least, which Syria is, might move. And so they've been very, very negative about any such move. I personally think that U.N. peacekeeping forces could do a very valuable job there.

KALB: Mr. Trewhitt?

HENRY TREWHITT: Mrs. Kirkpatrick, you mentioned earlier that the allies in Europe were concerned first of all about issues that were related to NATO European defense. How does the Grenada invasion play in that regard, do you think? Is it going to change the attitude of Allied governments regarding the deployment of INF weapons in Europe, that sort of thing?

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: No, I don't think so. I think that those questions are going to be settled on the basis of European considerations.

TREWHITT: What about European publics, which have been very vocal against INF deployment? How much ammunition does an event such as this give them?

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: I think that the question of deployments, missile deployments, in Europe will be settled on the basis of European considerations, European security finally. I really, truly do. I think that the Soviet and related -- domestic communist party propaganda apparatuses in those governments, in those countries -- excuse me -- in those countries is sufficiently effective that they find grounds for attacking us and casting doubts and aspersions on our motives and on our behavior virtually regardless of what we do, frankly.

TREWHITT: Mrs. Kirkpatrick, I'm going to do a quick 180 degree turn here, because I may not have another chance to ask you about your personal plans. I've heard you nominated for everything from immediate retirement to Secretary of State. Are you preparing to leave the United Nations?

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: I'm not preparing anything.

TREWHITT: Do you plan to stay in office till the end of this term?

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: I'm not pre -- I'm not given to long-range planning.

KALB: Madam Ambassador, I'd like to go back to Grenada and try to re-phase a question asked earlier. Most people I think have praised the President in terms of trying to protect American lives on Grenada. The issue that comes up is whether the United States can arrogate to itself the right, because of its military power in Latin America, to change government there,

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to overthrow a government there. How do you respond to that?

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: Well, I think that like all questions of politics an international affairs and law, one has to look at the concrete circumstances and not at the abstract question. I think that given the concrete circumstances in Grenada, that the legal, as well as the moral and political case for our action, was very strong. Now I think that we'd have to look at other concrete cases to make decisions about what would be justified in other concrete cases.

KALB: But you're a specialist in that -- this area. You know the long shadow likely to be cast by another use of massive American military power to accomplish a political aim. Does this bother you? Are you concerned about this?

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: Quite frankly, as a specialist in the area, I am not, and I will tell you why. I was in Venezuela two years ago and a very high level official in that government, who shall go nameless, looked at a map of the region. It showed Grenada and Venezuela. They were 90 miles apart. And he drew a circle from Grenada, in which circle was reflected the range of a MIG leaving Grenada, to show what kind of control of air, how far that MIG could attain, how far over Venezuela that MIG could get from Grenada.

I have had other Latin officials show me, in very concrete terms, where the sea lanes -- what it meant to the sea lanes through which all shipping that passes through the Panama Canal into the Atlantic pass with regard to Grenada.

I have been just recently in Central America and I have listened to very high level officials and influential private sector journalists, publishers, writers, teachers, businessmen, all kinds of people, labor leaders in those countries worry desperately about the vulnerability of their governments and their countries to the growing superior and aggressive force of Nicaragua in the region. I do not, quite frankly, believe that this use -- limited, specific, purposeful -- of force by the United States, in conjunction with the other states in the region, is going to produce the sort of backlash that you're describing in the area. And I do say that most earnestly, as someone with a longstanding interests in this area.

KALB: Mr. Monroe?

MONROE: Many Americans support the administration's action in Grenada, but I wonder if you're saying that that action, that military success had no moral cost, no public opinion cost, in view of the unanimity shown by nations at the United Nations, at the Organization of American States against the action we took, with the exception of the U.S. and the six Caribbean islands.

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AMB. KIRKPATRICK: Well, now wait a minute. Let's --let's not say that there was unanimity, because there wasn't unanimity. That's -- there wasn't unanimity at all. And what there was was a Security Council vote, which was heavily against us.

MONROE: Eleven to one.

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: But let me remind you -- with three abstentions. Let me remind you that there are -- the United States regularly loses in the United Nations, in the General Assembly and in the Security Council. No nation is more regularly both a loser and a victim at the United Nations than the United States except Israel, who is even more totally a loser and a a victim.

The United Nations is a political system and it's a political system which is largely controlled by our adversaries. I've been talking about this even since I've been there. It is not news when the United States is outvoted at the United Nations. It only becomes news when, for some reason or another, we're about to eke out a victory in some U.N.

MONROE: In view -- in view of the international reaction to this situation in Grenada, with nations such as the French, the Dutch, the Pakistanis, the Mexicans, and other obviously condemnatory of what we have done, are you telling us that there was no moral cost and no public opinion cost to that action?

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: Mr. Monroe, I'm telling you that I don't think there's any moral cost to that action. I'll go beyond that and say that I don't think there's any moral cost in France with the French Government. I would say that there are at least as many Frenchmen, attentive Frenchmen who are shocked by the decision of their government to vote for that resolution as who support it. If you follow the French press, which I do all the time, let me say, I think that's quite clear. Many Frenchmen see our action in Grenada as least as defensible, and perhaps even more understandable, morally, politically, legally as France's action, for example, in Chad to help protect that country against terror.

KALB: Mr. Smith?

SMITH: Madam Ambassador, you've made a major point, and so has the President, about protecting American citizens on Grenada, and certainly Americans here want to see that done. But there are some who contend that not all was done before the invasion to get them out peacefully, that the airport in Grenada was open on the Monday before the invasion. Wasn't there more that the United States could have done peacefully to evacuate Americans without an invasion?

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AMB. KIRKPATRICK: All I can say is that -- one, I do't think it was an invasion; I think it was a rescue. And I think that we ought to stop calling it an invasion, if I may say so. It was a rescue operation and it was felt and recognized to be such by most of the Americans involved. I don't doubt that you can find one, or two or three who think the contrary. It was, I believe, well-handled. We had to behave very prudently, because it was also very clear that those -- that there was proximate, real danger already posed to those -- particularly to those students, as well as to the Governor-General, I think, in Grenada.

SMITH: What do you say to the 30 or 40 people who came out by air on Monday from Grenada peacefully, some of them Americans, one of them Director of the President's Commission on Social Security?

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: They were fortunate.

KALB: Mr. Novak?

NOVAK: Ambassador Kirkpatrick, a week ago today The Washington Post had a front page story which described you as embittered and referred to what they said you believed to be the, quote, "week and rudderless leadership of Secretary of State George Shultz," unquote. Is that a correct characterization of your attitude toward the Secretary of State?

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: I'm glad you raised that question. I would like to say that about 90 percent of what's been published about me and the Secretary of State, or any other figure in our government, or any other post in our government in the last two weeks has been really hopelessly distorted.

NOVAK: What about this...

KALB: Two minutes to go.

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: That on is one of those. This is -- I mean it is just simply, you know, not an accurate characterization of my views at all.

NOVAK: Do you consider yourself embittered because...

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: No, not at all. Not at all. I mean -- you know, this was , Bob, a media event, which I still don't understand quite either -- I don't understand who scripted it and I don't understand who pushed it. And I just know that it was largely not so. I consider it behind me.

KALB: Mr. Trewhitt?

TREWHITT: Mrs. Kirkpatrick, you just a few minutes ago,

made a fairly strong case for the position that the United States is consistently belabored and in the minority in the United Nations. Is there any plan to grade-down U.S. participation in the United Nations? And if not, why not, in those circumstances, if that is a correct characterization of our role?

AMB. KIRKPATRICK: I think -- I've said it many times since I've been there, Mr. Trewhitt. I think what we have to do is be more effective in the United Nations. We let really -- we let our influence in that body and our effectiveness in that body decline through a period of probably twenty years. We failed to understand what kind of a political system it is and we have failed above all to adequately link our relations with nations inside the U.N. to our relations with nations outside the U.N.

The fact is a good many of the nations with whom we have very good relations outside the U.N. behave very badly toward us regularly, on a wide range of issues, inside the U.N. I think we need to let nations know that if they want to be friends of ours outside the U.N., they need to behave like friends inside U.N. bodies as well. That, I think, is the answer.

KALB: Thank you, Ambassador Kirkpatrick, for being with us today on Meet the Press.